

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims will replace those previously submitted.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A method for packaging a product arranged in a tray located within a sealing chamber having an upper part and a lower part which are movable relative to each other wherein an upper film located in a distance above the product is clamped along an edge surrounding the tray and thereafter after the film is clamped, the film is stretched in a direction extending away from the product and pulled from the clamped edge, and wherein subsequently after the film is stretched, the tray is raised relative to the upper film, and then after the tray is raised, the edge of the tray and the upper film are sealed, wherein the clamping of the edge of the upper film is carried out by means of closing the chamber parts.

2. (Original) A method for packaging a product arranged in a tray according to claim 1, wherein the space surrounding the product is evacuated before sealing.

3. (Original) A method for packaging a product arranged in a tray according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the space surrounding the product is filled with a gas before sealing.

4. (Currently amended) A packaging machine for packaging a product, comprising:
- a sealing station with a chamber defining an internal space and comprising an upper tool with a sealing element and a lower tool, the upper and lower tools being movable relative to each other into an opened and into a closed position;
 - a tray which is insertable into the internal space when in the opened position;
 - a device for supplying an upper film into the interior space of the chamber;
 - a drive mechanism for the relative movement of the upper and the lower tool and for the sealing element; and
 - a control for controlling the drive mechanism which is formed such that the chamber is closed after the supply of the tray and by closing to thereby firmly clamp the upper film along an edge surrounding an edge of the tray, thereafter after the film is clamped, the upper film is stretched in a direction upwardly away from the product and pulling from the edge, and after the film is stretched, then the tray is raised towards the upper film, and after the tray is raised, the upper film is subsequently sealed to the tray thereto.

5. (Original) A packaging machine according to claim 4, wherein the control is formed such that an evacuating of the space surrounding the product and if necessary, a supplying of gas into this space is performed before the sealing.

6. (Previously Presented) A packaging machine according to claim 4 with:
- a device for accommodating a tray in the interior of the chamber; and
 - wherein the device for accommodating the tray is bi-directionally movable between a first position in which the tray has a maximum distance to the plane of the upper film and a second position in which the tray has a minimum distance to this plane.

7. (Original) A packaging machine according to claim 6, wherein the upper tool comprises a forming tool with a recess facing the lower tool.

8. (Original) A packaging machine according to claim 6 or 7, comprising:

a tray carrier insertable into the sealing station for sealing of a package is provided having a frame which is supported between the upper and the lower tool, when the sealing station is closed, and a carrying part; and wherein the carrying part is bi-directionally movable for performing the variation of the distance.

9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the upper film is stretched in a direction extending upwardly away from the product.